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ABSTRACT

The quantity and nature of parent-child verbal interactions, reading to and with children, and the availability and use of reading materials at home are factors that influence literacy development. Since many parents of first-grade children are not taking advantage of opportunities at home to engage their children in appropriate activities to further oral language, reading and writing development, a 6-session parent reading workshop was conducted at two elementary school sites. In this workshop format a way to share information with the parents on critical research findings on issues related to emergent readers (developmental stages, how the brain works, elements of balanced literacy instruction) was developed. Appropriate strategies for teaching and scaffolding learning in each of the areas of balanced literacy were modeled. Parents had opportunities to "make and take" materials and activities to use with their children at home--a literacy toolkit. The hope was that a partnership with the first-grade parents would be built so that the literacy philosophies, strategies, and activities at home and at school are more in alignment. More frequent and open communication between parents and teacher was the aim. As the parents involved in the reading workshops become more knowledgeable and skilled in working with their first graders, they would be encouraged to volunteer time in the classroom and share their knowledge formally and informally with other parents. Results indicated: (1) parents demonstrated a heightened awareness of their role in supporting their child's literacy development; (2) they engaged their children in a wider variety of quality literacy activities at home; (3) parent/teacher communication was strengthened; and (4) parents shifted to a more balanced viewpoint about reading. Appended are a home reading log and a parent reading survey. (Contains 16 references.) (NKA)

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Parent Education For Supporting Literacy Development

In The Early Grades

By

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Problem Statement

Parents are their child's first teachers. What parents choose to do or not do in their home can have a lasting effect on their child's future reading skills and literacy development. However, many parents are not taking advantage of simple, essential opportunities that would promote full, healthy child development and good reading readiness in the early years. The quantity and nature of parent-child verbal interactions, reading to and with children, and the availability and use of reading materials at home are factors that influence literacy development (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

An overview of literacy research reflects that the time spent in adult-child interactions around reading and writing with children before school is important, but so is the quality of those interactions. Other factors that seem to influence a child's reading and writing development include the parent(s) attitudes toward literacy, and the accessibility of literacy materials in the home (Haussler & Goodman, 1984).

In discussing with parents the types of literacy activities they promote and support at home, Calkins (1994) found that parents viewed appropriate homework activities to be skill and drill worksheets that reinforced classroom instruction. In fact, they often purchased additional skills workbooks for their children to complete at home because they thought even more of these types of activities would be of benefit.

As former first grade teachers, and now as Reading Recovery teachers, we know it is critical to provide appropriate support of literacy learning while students are in the emergent stage. Through our experience, we see the problem exists with parents of first graders who do not realize the importance or regularly reading and writing with their children at home. Those parents who are consistent about working with their first graders often have serious

misunderstandings about the amount of time to be spent, effective materials, and appropriate scaffolding.

We'd like the first grade parents at our schools to consistently work on literacy activities with their children at home in a more productive way. We are hopeful that we can provide parents with information and support them in using activities that will result in their child's more positive attitudes about reading and increased overall literacy knowledge and ability. The solution, then, is to help first grade parents become more effective in working on literacy activities with their children at home.

The problem we've identified is that many of our first grade parents are not taking advantage of opportunities at home to engage their child in appropriate activities to further oral language, reading and writing development.

Purpose and Objectives

We expect to hold a 6-session parent reading workshop at two sites: Dixie Downs Elementary and LaVerkin Elementary. Each workshop group will meet once a month for an hour so parents have an opportunity to process and apply information between each session. We will invite all first grade parents from both schools to attend. We will collaborate on the planning and teaching of the sessions at both schools.

In this workshop format, we will develop a way to share information with the parents on the critical research findings on issues related to emergent readers: developmental stages, how the brain works, and elements of balanced literacy instruction. We will model appropriate strategies for teaching and scaffolding learning in each of the areas of balanced literacy. Parents will have opportunities to "make and take" materials and activities to use with their children at home – a literacy toolkit.

Thus, we hope to build a partnership with the first grade parents so that the literacy philosophies, strategies, and activities at home and at school are more in alignment. We want to facilitate more frequent and open communication between parents and teachers around the students' literacy development. We will hold interactive discussions with parents about literacy issues, respond to the observations on their home reading logs, and model literacy interactions with their children. As the parents involved in the reading workshops become more knowledgeable and skilled in working with their first graders, we'll encourage them to volunteer time in the first grade classrooms and to share their knowledge formally, and informally with other parents.

Objectives

1. Develop an understanding of the research literature related to family literacy programs that deal with parent education, and with emergent literacy issues, in general.

2. Create an instructor's notebook that contains relevant research and information, course materials, handouts, learning activities and assessments.

3. Create a partnership with first grade parents to support their children's literacy development by facilitating more frequent communication between parents, classroom teachers, and the school literacy coordinator.

4. Put more print and other literacy materials in the homes of first graders by giving parents free books and assist them in the creation of literacy toolbox containing word work manipulatives, a writing notebook, sight word cards, and reference materials for parents (i.e. the developmental reading continuum), etc.

5. Create awareness in parents that learning to read is a developmental process. Help parents understand the current best practices in reading instruction and the components of a balanced literacy program.

6. Evaluate the impact, if any, on the children's attitudes, motivation, and literacy skills and strategies.

7. Make any necessary modifications on the workshop format and content for next year.

Review of Literature

The National Research Council (1998) compiled research that indicates parent beliefs and attitudes about literacy can influence their child's reading development and have a lasting effect on their reading attitudes. Children whose parents view reading as fun and entertaining have more positive views on reading than children whose parents view reading as skill based.

Parental attitudes toward reading also influence the home literacy environment. Several characteristics of home environments associated with reading achievement have emerged from research. They include: easy access to a variety of print, reading to and with children regularly, setting aside a special place and time for reading, positive parent attitudes, modeling of reading, regular visits to the library, and frequent parent/child conversations (Allington, 1998).

Specific literacy activities that parents engage in with their children at home also make a difference. For example, when parents learn how to converse more and respond to their child during shared reading, the child shows gains in literacy skills (Whitehurst et al., 1994 as cited in National Research Council, 1998). Furthermore, a 1993 review of over 40 studies of parents listening to their children read indicates that merely listening to children read at home may not result in significant gains in reading development, especially for children with reading difficulties, unless parents receive instruction in specific strategies to use to assist their child (Allington, 1998).

The first critical issue in creating an effective intervention to promote family literacy is getting parents to participate. Fredericks and Rasinski (1990) suggest building from what the family or families already have in place. Don't focus too much on why some families choose not to be involved, but keep the lines of open and create many sustained opportunities for education and involvement throughout the school year.

Parents are more likely to participate in school-based family literacy activities if they have a voice in the planning and implementation of these programs. Schools often tend to be the initiator. The instruction of parents is very directive and programs lack continuity, often consisting of several sessions of unrelated activities (Rasinski, 1989). If parents believe they can and should work with their child at home, and are invited to participate in program development, they can have an impact. Activities should be clear and easy to follow with necessary materials supplied, and adequate support needs to be provided to help parents implement these activities (Brand, 1996).

One first grade teacher implemented a school/home dialog journal system that invited parents to share their observations of their child's literacy development, concerns, and questions, to which the teacher then responded (Shockley, 1994). Other teachers have felt that working collaboratively with parents in this fashion helped to initiate and continue new, more meaningful relationships that were of benefit to the children's learning (Short, Harste, and Burke, 1996).

Another issue in creating a successful family literacy intervention is identifying the parents' current beliefs and values about literacy. McMackin (1993) found that many parents misunderstand current teaching philosophies and practices as they relate to literacy. Parents tend to be actively involved in early literacy interventions with their preschool-aged children, but they become more uncertain about the reading process and their role in it as their child starts school. Most parents of beginning readers today were taught to read by an isolated skills approach in school. As a result, these same parents are often reluctant to work with their children at home because they don't know the correct sequence of skills to teach. They're afraid they might confuse their child if they teach reading in a way that is different from how they think it is taught in school. Parents need to understand that the focus in reading instruction currently is to help

readers gain meaning from the text using strategies and cueing systems. These strategies are: visual, semantic, syntactic, and connecting to personal knowledge and experiences.

Parents were also taught to read using decodable texts that often had very little picture support. Parents frequently comment that their children "cheat" by using the pictures as they read. Parents don't understand the purpose of the natural language books often found in reading instruction. These books help students connect the ideas in the story with their personal past experiences and knowledge. The pictures support the beginning reader by confirming the message as it is constructed from the text. Parents also tend to discourage their beginning reader from pointing to the words while reading. Pointing actually helps early readers solidify the sound/symbol relationship and the concepts about print. Children naturally phase out the use of their finger to point while reading when they become more comfortable with tracking. Another issue of parent misconceptions is the connection of reading and writing. Parents are often not aware of how reading and writing instruction can compliment and support each other because when they were young, reading and writing were taught as completely separate processes (McMackin, 1993).

In addition to dealing with misconceptions about effective literacy instruction, an effective training intervention for parents needs to consider the nature of the literacy activities parents will be asked to do at home. Many parents are already doing school-like activities in their homes and many school/parent partnerships just focus on training parents to do more of the same. Enz and Searfoss (1996) suggest that we can do better. We should help parents recognize and value the range of literacy opportunities that occur naturally in the home setting. These informal activities involve reading and writing for authentic purposes: addressing envelopes,

reading labels on food containers, creating a shopping list, reading signs, writing a postcard or thank you letter, etc.

Some family literacy programs for at risk readers have sent home backpacks of selected reading and writing materials around some theme. While making the materials available increased the amount of home literacy events, parents needed explicit modeling, and support in using the materials effectively and in creating opportunities for enriched language experiences (Richgels, 1998). Perhaps lack of knowledge doesn't mean lack of interest when it comes to parent involvement (Brand, 1996). Spiegel states:

> ...if children who come to school knowing little about literacy are left to explore literacy primarily on their own, they may stay behind, both because they lack the rich literacy foundations on which to base explorations and because their parents do not have the knowledge to assist them in their learning (Gambrell,. Morrow, Neuman, & Pressley, 1999, p. 249).

Procedures

1. Organize Workshop
2. Select Assessment Instruments
3. Administer Pre-Assessments for Parents and Students
4. Organize Materials for Workshops
5. Organize Presentations for Workshops
6. Conduct Workshop Sessions
7. Home Visit Observations
8. Administer Post-Assessments for Parents and Students
9. Evaluation of Workshop

We will develop a Home Reading Survey to administer to the parents to collect information on their home environment, the amount of time they currently spend working with their child, and the types of activities they do at home. We will also administer the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) to determine if the parents tend to be more phonics, skills, or whole language oriented in their philosophical beliefs about reading. These measures will be administered as pre and post assessments. Parents will keep Home Reading Logs to record their activities and observations as they work with their first grades at home. We will conduct home visits to observe some parents actually working with their children, and two sessions of focus groups to determine parents' questions, issues, and the degree to which the workshop sessions are meeting their needs.

We will administer the Garfield Reading Attitude Survey and the Observation Survey to a systematic sampling of first graders whose parents are not participating in the workshops and

to all first graders who have a parent participating in the workshops. These instruments will also be administered as pre and post assessments.

Timeline:

August 1999:	Initial Meeting With Dr. Reutzel
	Preliminary Reading of Some Secondary Sources
September 1999:	Rough Out Workshop Scope and Sequence
	Hold Informational Meeting for Parents
	Administer Pre-Assessments for Parents and First Graders
	Meet With Drs. Thompson and Lund to Discuss Pre-Assessment Data and Workshop Content and Format
October 1999:	First Workshop Session at Each School
November 1999:	Second Workshop Session at Each School
	Meet With Drs. Thompson and Lund to Discuss Project Status
December 1999:	Third Workshop Session at Each School
	Focus Groups
January 2000:	Fourth Workshop Session at Each School
	Home Visits

February 2000:	Fifth Workshop Session at Each School (With Children) Meet With Drs. Thompson and Lund to Discuss Project Status Complete Literature Review and Draft of Project Proposal
March 2000:	Sixth Workshop Session at Each School Administer Post-Assessments for Parents and First Graders Home Visits
April 2000:	Complete 1st Draft of Project Report Assemble Trainer Notebooks Meet With Drs. Thompson and Lund to Analyze Data
May 2000:	Complete Master's Project Results/Conclusions Chapter Schedule Oral Presentation Submit Application to Present at the 2000 SUU Summer Reading Conference
Fall 2000:	Submit Paper for Publication in One or More Professional Journals

Evaluation

1. Develop an understanding of the research literature related to family literacy programs that deal with parent education, and with emergent literacy issues, in general.

   Evaluation Criteria: Scope, organization and clarity of the literature review section of our project proposal.

2. Create an instructor's notebook that contains relevant research and information, course materials, handouts, learning activities and assessments.

   Evaluation Criteria: Structure, organization, and comprehensive content of materials.

3. Create a partnership with first grade parents to support their children's literacy development by: facilitating more frequent communication between parents, classroom teachers, and the school literacy coordinator.

   Evaluation Criteria: Anecdotal evidence reported by teachers and parents, examination of home reading log observations and comments, self-report statements by teachers and parents.

4. Put more print and other literacy materials in the home of first graders by giving parents free books and assist them in the creation of a literacy toolbox containing word work manipulatives, a writing notebook, sight word card, reference materials for parents, (i.e. the developmental reading continuum).

Evaluation Criteria: Observations during home visits, self-report statements by parents.

5. Create awareness in parents that learning to read is a developmental process. Help parents understand the current best practices in reading instruction and the components of a balanced literacy program.

Evaluation Criteria: TORP scores for parents, parent self-report statements.

6. Evaluate the impact, if any, on the children's attitudes, motivation and literacy skills and strategies.

Evaluation Criteria: Garfield Attitude Survey for students, Observation Survey, anecdotal comments of parents in home reading logs and teachers' comments.

7. Make any necessary modifications on the workshop format and content for next year.

Evaluation Criteria: Feedback from parents and project advisors is reflected in revised format and content of next year's session(s).

We will deem ourselves successful if: the participating parents shift their philosophical perspective on reading to a more balanced view; they increase the amount of time they spend working with their children at home on literacy activities; they use a wider variety of activities and materials; their oral language interactions shift to include more prompting for problem solving; and they report the workshop as being helpful to their success in working with their children. We also hope to find the attitudes toward reading, and literacy development of the participating children to improve.

Results/Conclusions

Objective 1: Develop an understanding of the research literature related to family literacy programs that deal with parent education, and with emergent literacy issues, in general.

The idea for creating a parent class was the result of attending a review of research by CIERA (Center for Improvement of Early Reading) at last year's International Reading Association. The presenters spoke about research findings indicating the importance of parental support in students' academic success and we were excited about the prospect of providing reading information to our parents. In the process of conducting the literature review for our project, we browsed Dr. Reutzel's extensive professional library, learned how to conduct an electronic search, became familiar with the SUU library, and thoroughly reviewed several primary and secondary sources related to our topic. In conducting our action research project, we collected data to support much of what we found in the literature:

- Parents' beliefs and attitudes about reading impact their child's reading development.
- Parent attitudes about reading influence the home literacy environment.
- Many parents misunderstand current teaching philosophies and practices related to literacy.
- Parents need to be taught specific strategies they can use to best assist their child during reading.
- Parents are often unaware that reading and writing instruction can compliment and support each other.
- Parents are more likely to participate in a school-based literacy program if they have a voice in the planning and implementation.

- Working collaboratively with parents helps to initiate and continue new, more meaningful relationships with parents that are of benefit to the child's learning.
- Parents tend to engage their child in a limited number of school-like literacy activities.
- Parents need explicit modeling and support in using literacy materials at home.

Objective 2. Create an instructor's notebook that contains relevant research and information, course materials, handouts, learning activities and assessments.

We each compiled and organized the materials and assessment data for our parent workshop in an instructor's notebook. Our notebooks are organized into five sections:

Development and Planning: This section contains notes from meetings with our advisors describing decisions we made as we began our project and how it changed as we went through sessions collecting information.

Forms: This section consists of letters written to parents, participant registration information, and templates we developed for communication and assessment, such as Home Reading Logs and Parent Reading Survey.

Assessments: This section describes administration information, reliability/validity data and recording sheets for the TORP, Garfield Attitude Survey, The Observational Survey. It also contains the data we've collected in our pre and post assessments of the parents and students.

Class Sessions: This section contains lesson plans and materials for each class session, including:

reading process information: predictors of reading success, concepts about print, reading prompts, developmental reading continuum, materials to make a word building kit.

related information: brain development, types of texts, reciprocal nature of reading/writing, interactive writing activity, role of rhyme, collection of poems, decoding through association, supportive book introductions.

discussion: reading log entries, review of previous class session content, promoting self-monitoring, teaching sight words, questions from parents.

reading celebration with first graders: five centers to include reading, writing, listening, games, interactive reading on the computer, and publishing on the computer.

Review: information from the National Reading Recovery Conference, addressing final concerns and issues raised by parents (i.e. dyslexia), assessments, discussion.

Research: This section is a collection of citations, abstracts, notes, and articles related to our review of literature.

Objective 3. Create a partnership with first grade parents to support their children's literacy development by facilitating more frequent communication between parents, classroom teachers, and the school literacy coordinator.

All parents of first grade students at Dixie Downs Elementary and LaVerkin Elementary were sent written invitations to attend monthly, evening classes on reading from September through March. A total of thirty-three parents signed up to participate. Of those thirty-three, six parents consistently attended sessions at LaVerkin Elementary and ten parents consistently attended sessions at Dixie Downs Elementary. We systematically sampled the remaining first graders at each school to select a control group.

	LaVerkin	Dixie Downs	Total
Workshop Parent Participants:	6	10	16
Participants' First Graders:	7	10	17
Systematic Sample First Graders:	13	9	22

We co-taught the six workshop sessions at each school, but did our own assessments and observations with the students and parents at our individual schools. Each workshop session was an hour long. The general format of each session was:

- Check out books
- Read aloud
- Discussion of home reading logs
- Review of the previous class material
- Clarification of any questions or concerns
- Presentation of new information on a reading issue

- Demonstration and practice of a new literacy tool or technique
- Check out books
- Select a book to keep. Books to build a home reading library were given away for each Home Reading Log returned.
- Parents discuss individual concerns or questions

Home Reading Logs (Appendix A) were developed to encourage a quick, easy way for parents to record how much time they worked together with their child, types of activities and observations. It was possible to keep track of 16 days on one sheet. Parents' comments from the logs were often the vehicle for class discussion, questions and future class topics. Parents were able to choose a picture book to keep for each reading log they submitted.

To analyze and summarize the logs we followed the grounded theory of Strauss (1987). We cut the logs apart to isolate individual comments and grouped similar comments into these categories: Behaviors, Activities, and Comments/Observations. Our separate grouping and organizing of the comments were very similar and we agreed on the category labels. We tallied comments to determine the most frequent types within each category. The Home Reading Logs yielded interesting information in each category. The most frequent comments are listed below:

<u>Behaviors:</u>

Using multiple strategies

Helps younger siblings learn to read

Likes to do it himself/herself

Comments on pictures as he/she reads

Asks for unknown word

Asks to read

Activities:

Child often reading to other family members

Child reading independently

Child reading with support

Parents reading to the child

Completing homework sheets

Writing notes, cards, school reports, journal

Cut up sentences

Building spelling words with the pocket folder

Letter/word games, i.e. concentration

Oral story telling

Flash cards for letters or sight words

Interactive reading or word game software

Variety of reading materials being read to, with, and by child: scriptures, music lyrics, poems, environmental print, magazines, newspapers, fiction and nonfiction books

Comments:

"...liked rhyming books... Dr. Seuss."

"...feels success when he reads."

"...enjoys rereading stories."

"...asks for reading time."

"I feel more confident in helping my child."

"The logs made me aware of what works with my child."

The Home Reading Logs showed time spent reading varied from five to ninety minutes a day, with the average time being fifteen to twenty minutes a day. This data matches how much time parents reported spending with their child on the Parent Reading Survey.

Our Parent Reading Survey (Appendix B), administered in the Fall and Spring, showed an impact for some parents and their children in these areas.

Reading materials

library cards. Half of our parents initially reported their children did not have library cards in the Fall. Most of the children did have library cards by the Spring.

preference for types. Five parents reported their child showed a preference for a wider variety of print. Initially, most of the children preferred stories. This data was also supported by the Home Reading Logs.

Activities

no writing. Initially, no parents reported working on writing activities which was a deciding factor in choosing to include information and practice in that area. We addressed temporary spelling, interactive writing and sentence strip puzzles adapted from Reading Recovery. A variety of activities were reported in the Spring, including writing, for some children. This data was also supported by the Home Reading Logs.

Amount of time spent

reading to child. Six parents reported spending more days of the week reading to their child, and six reported spending a longer period of time reading to their child.

child reading independently. Five children were reported as increasing the number of days per week spent reading at home. Four parents reported their children began to spend more time reading alone, and five reported their children began to spend more time reading aloud to others.

Parents' feelings when working with their child

improved parent confidence. The majority of parents (10) reported they felt more confident in knowing how to help their child. The five parents who initially said they felt frustrated at times, reported reading with their children was now more pleasurable. The focus group discussions corroborated this data.

Focus group discussions held mid year and at the final class echoed much of the same information found on the daily logs. We each taped, and later transcribed these discussions. The discussions were organized around a common set of pre-arranged, open-ended questions. We followed up responses with additional questions of clarification and elaboration as necessary. The data from our transcripts of the focus group discussions yielded this additional information:

Usefulness of strategy approach: Parents expressed feeling confident in working with their child on homework and reading because they had a variety of tools or strategies from which to choose.

Working with children was less stressful: Parents felt less stress and came to feel that the quality of time spent was more important than quantity.

Relevance of information shared: Several parents expressed excitement about all the information they were receiving. They wished they had been more aware when their older children were learning to read. One mother felt her understanding "would impact the rest of my child's schooling" in many positive ways.

Improved communication with classroom teachers: We heard comments that revealed parents were talking to classroom teachers with more confidence and asking more questions about their children's literacy development. Teachers supported our efforts in working with parents by encouraging them to participate in our reading workshop. We shared information and materials from the reading workshop sessions with our first grade teachers throughout the course of the year. Teachers and parents reported that discussions at parent/teacher conferences often touched on information we covered in the workshop sessions, allowing for a more comfortable, collaboration when setting student goals.

Reading celebration: Comments about the reading celebration were positive. We had the opportunity to observe parents and children working together in activities of their choice. As we observed parents and their children interacting at the various centers, we were able to reinforce what was being done well and model other appropriate strategies.

Objective 4: Put more print and other literacy materials in the home of first graders by giving parents free books and assist them in the creation of a literacy toolbox containing word work manipulatives, a writing notebook, sight word card, reference materials for parents, (i.e. the developmental reading continuum).

We triangulated our qualitative and quantitative data from multiple sources (Patton, 1990). Data from the Parent Reading Survey, the focus group discussions, and our home observations indicate that during the course of the year, parents began to use a wider variety of literacy materials as they interacted with their children at home. For example, parents reported using the pocket charts to make and break words. Some used sound and letter boxes to support their child's writing. They did activities to help their child learn sight words. Children read along with taped stories. Parents also reported making a conscious attempt to purchase books at their child's reading level.

Objective 5: Create awareness in parents that learning to read is a developmental process. Help parents understand the current best practices in reading instruction and the components of a balanced literacy program.

From comments on the Home Reading Logs, and during focus group discussions, we learned that parents gradually came to understand that reading is developmental. They began to notice and record behaviors associated with a particular stage of reading development. We found somewhat of a discrepancy, however, between what parents said they knew, and what they actually practiced. Based on observations of parents interacting with their children during the reading celebration (Session 5) and during our home visits, most of the parents working with struggling readers remained very visual and phonetic in their cueing as they worked with their children at home and during the reading celebration night at school. For example, the most common prompt we heard parents use was "Sound it out". From the TORP, we found a shift in

parents' philosophical stance in reading, but this was not evidenced as much in their actual practice.

Objective 6: Evaluate the impact, if any, on the children's attitudes, motivation and literacy skills and strategies.

We found a significant improvement in the attitudes and motivation for reading of the students whose parents participated in our yearly reading workshop. Students in both the experimental and control group showed significant gains in their reading development, with the vast majority of the students at or above grade level by the end of the school year. The students in our experimental group had significantly lower pre-assessment scores on the Observation Survey, however, their post-assessment scores were comparable to those of the control group. They made larger net gains in reading development. Gains in reading development were most likely due to a combination of effective classroom instruction, reading interventions (Reading Recovery, Title I tutoring, literacy groups, peer coaching), as well as the information the participating parents received in our reading workshop.

Objective 7: Make any necessary modifications on the workshop format and content for next year.

As suggested by the parents, themselves, we will condense the workshop into a shorter timeframe. We'll meet every other week for three months. We think this will still give parents enough time to process and implement the strategies and try out the materials between each session. They'll also have the advantage of getting all of the information before the school year progresses too far along. Thus, they'll have more time during the course of the year to work effectively at home with their children.

Some of our assessment instruments need to be revised to yield more useful information. For example, we found many of the comments on the Home Reading Log to be too general. We need to spend more time explaining, modeling and discussing the types of comments we'd like to see on the Home Reading Logs. We also need to look at rewriting the TORP to make it user-friendly to parents. We found we needed to paraphrase the items as we administered this assessment instrument.

Parents seemed to like the content of the workshop, although they recommended we include more time for modeling, observation and feedback as they attempted to implement new strategies with their children. We think we could accomplish this by including:

- more home visits during the course of the year
- initiating follow-up phone calls with parents after each session to discuss how things are going and give them an opportunity to ask questions related specifically to their child
- revising the Home Reading Logs so they become more of a dialog journal between the parent and ourselves where we respond to their comments and make suggestions specific to their child
- more time demonstrating techniques and use of materials with children during the parent workshop. Perhaps we'll have the children attend for at least part of each workshop session.

We'd also like to include some sessions with both classroom teachers and the parents to help build rapport and a common language of discussing reading development. In these joint sessions of parents and teachers, we'd spend more time modeling the specific strategies and

language to use to scaffold reading development. We'd also give the parents and teachers the opportunity to practice with the children as we observe and give feedback.

Implications and Summary Comments

There were four major outcomes of this action research project. Parents demonstrated a heightened awareness of their roll in supporting their child's literacy development. They also engaged their children in a wider variety of quality literacy activities at home. Parent/teacher communication was strengthened by creating a common language and more opportunity to discuss literacy development students. Our instruction influenced parents' beliefs about reading. They shifted to a more balanced viewpoint.

Our project raised four major issues and concerns that merit further consideration and study. How can we involve more parents of at-risk readers and home-schooled children? Why did motivation/attitude toward reading appear to decrease over the school year for some of our students? How might we increase the involvement of our first grade teachers in future parent workshops? Parent attitudes about reading instruction shifted. How do we promote the transfer to actual practice?

Appendix A: Home Reading Log

Weekly Home Reading Log

Child's Name: _____

Date: **# of min.:** **Activity:** **Observations:**	**Date:** **# of min.:** **Activity:** **Observations:**	**Date:** **# of min.:** **Activity:** **Observations:**	**Date:** **# of min:** **Activity:** **Observations:**
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Appendix B: Parent Reading Survey

Name:_____ Date:_____
Child's Name:_____
Relationship to child:_____

PARENT READING SURVEY

1. I read with my child:
   - () Every Day
   - () 5-6 Days a week
   - () 3-4 Days a week
   - () 1-2 Days a week
   - () Less than 1 Day

2. My child looks at books/ Reads out-of-school:
   - () Every Day
   - () 5-6 Days a week
   - () 3-4 Days a week
   - () 1-2 Days a week
   - () Less than 1 Day

3. My child prefers:
   - () Stories
   - () Poems/Nursery Rhymes
   - () Informational Books
   - () Magazines
   - () Newspapers

4. I read with my child for:
   - () 5-10 min. at a time
   - () 10-15 min. at a time
   - () 15-20 min. at a time
   - () More than 20 min.

5. Types of activities we practice:
   - () Letters & sounds
   - () Writing stories
   - () Games/letter or reading
   - () Computer

6. My child:
   - () Reads Alone
   - () Reads Aloud to others
   - () Likes to be read to
   - () Resists reading

7. When I read with my child I feel confident in how to help him improve:
   - () Often
   - () Most of the time
   - () Sometimes
   - () Seldom

8. We have a scheduled time to read:
   - () Often
   - () Most of the time
   - () Sometimes
   - () Seldom

9. Reading with my child is:
   - () A pleasure
   - () Frustrating
   - () Sometimes both

10. We have:
    - () Many children's books available
    - () Not enough children's books available
    - () Adequate children's books available

11. My child has a library card:
    - () Yes
    - () No

12. We have been to the library:
    - () Often
    - () Several Times
    - () Once or Twice
    - () Never

Schneider, Palmer '99

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